

World War One Diary – Alfred Wallis

Inside front cover:

A Wallis No. 3064

9th Battn C Coy KRRC

From Dais

June 23rd 1915

A Rose Duly enclose Rose just brought(sic) in Brompton Rd

Thursday 20 May 1915

At last the eventful day has arrived. We leave for France, we had a pleasant voyage, arriving Boulogne 2 am Friday, proceeded to rest camp.

Friday 21 May 1915

Delightful camp 1 ½ kilometres from harbour. Everything peaceful. We left at 12 Midnight for Pont-des-briques.

Saturday 22 May 1915

We entrained 2 am in cattle truck, 44 men to each. We were able to doze, Cassel was reached at 7.30 am. We had a rest and food, marched at 11am for Zeggars-Cappel arriving 1.30pm. Dead tired. Delightful place.

Sunday 23 May 1915

Lovely morning. Slept under hedge, spent day laying telegraph wires.

Monday 24 May 1915

We had 10 mile march, boiling hot. Heaps of men fell out. It seemed quite unnecessary.

Tuesday 25 May 1915

No parades. Done some washing. Still lovely weather.

Wednesday 26 May 1915

Another lovely day. Nothing doing.

Thursday 27 May 1915

Reveille 3am. Breakfast 4.30, Parade 5.30 marched through St Marles Cappell arriving 10am, a distance of 12 miles. Another barn for billet.

Friday 28 May 1915

Lovely weather. Nothing doing.

Saturday 29 May 1915

Nothing doing. Had a walk into Steenvoorde, quite a lovely place. Sold some decent beer for which we were thankful.

Sunday 30 May 1915

Revielle(sic) 3.00 marched away 5am to Dickbushe a distance of 16 miles. Arrived dead tired. Billeted in a barn

Monday 31 May 1915

Lovely day here. They are shelling aeroplanes all day long, quite exciting. Parade 6.30 to go trench digging S.E. of Ypres.

Tuesday 1 June 1915

Parade 6.30. Trench digging to finish trenches. Heavy firing on overnight.

Wednesday 2 June 1915

Finished trench digging. Very glad.

Thursday 3 June 1915

We moved our headquarters about ½ mile nearer frontline. The farm we left was burnt down during the night.

Friday 4 June 1915

On duty in reserve trench but came back to headquarters during afternoon.

Saturday 5 June 1915

On telephone at Headquarters. Our guns fired on German aeroplane but rotten shots.

Sunday 6 June 1915

C P Coys go in trenches at St Eloi(?) We are left behind in reserve dugouts for headquarters

Monday 7 June 1915

No Entry

Tuesday 8 June 1915

No Entry

Wednesday 9 June 1915

No Entry

Thursday 10 June 1915

No Entry

Friday 11 June 1915

No Entry

Saturday 12 June 1915

No Entry

Sunday 13 June 1915

Nothing doing today. The town has been shelled awful, hardly a house intact. Place full of spies, we hear.

Monday 14 June 1915

We marched to huts at Vlamertinge. Reach them at 4.00pm. They shell the place regular so we made dugouts. We had to use them at 11pm.

Tuesday 15 June 1915

At night we made dugouts at Ypres. We left our huts 4 miles behind so we were well under fire now.

Wednesday 16 June 1915

3am Terrific bombardment starts by our guns. The shells are coming from all directions. But still I curled up and slept for an hour or two (A1).

Thursday 17 June 1915

We marched back to huts; what a drag it was. Hot tea was waiting for us and we wanted it.

Friday 18 June 1915

Everything quiet today but we are dog-tired all the Coy believed me to be killed. I am reported as such

Saturday 19 June 1915

7.30 we marched back to trenches. A shell burst over A Coy laying out 17. We eventually reached trenches. Nothing doing.

Sunday 20 June 1915

We are in dugouts behind the firing line. A few shells fall near but nothing doing.

Monday 21 June 1915

We proceeded to supports but things were fairly quiet.

Tuesday 22 June 1915

17.30pm trouble starts terrific bombardment all night. We had several wounded in our trench, poor devils.

Wednesday 23 June 1915

Very quiet hard to believe what a hell it was a few hours before. The road to our left is shelled to try and catch transports.

Thursday 24 June 1915

Quiet morning. We were relieved at midnight by DC. We got away without a shell. What luck.

Friday 25 June 1915

We had hot stew on our journey here, was good. Reached Poperinge about 6am. Best billet we've had so far.

Saturday 26 June 1915

Quite a different class of people here, seem much more prosperous. Inhabitants bring round chocolate and biscuits.

Sunday 27 June 1915

Orderly man worse luck. Pay day too. Have tried to get into town but can't. I don't think many shells have fell here.

Monday 28 June 1915

Done telephone duty, otherwise everything quiet. A spy was arrested here tonight but I believe released.

Tuesday 29 June 1915

Everything quiet. Spent day playing (pontoon). Coys went trench digging. C Company had a few casualties.

Wednesday 30 June 1915

Fancy, 24 today. Had several letters sent to me, quite nice to have so many friends. Rain slightly but not long. C 1. 5?

Thursday 1 July 1915

Nothing doing, a lovely day. checked for four parcels, what luck.

Friday 2 July 1915

Still at the rest camp.

Saturday 3 July 1915

Lovely day everything quiet

Sunday 4 July 1915

We had voluntary church service morning and evening.

Monday 5 July 1915

Rumour we leave for trenches soon but I don't think it's true.

Tuesday 6 July 1915

Orderly man oh the grease(?). Orders to stand by to leave soon.

Wednesday 7 July 1915

Nice day. We leave for trenches tomorrow afternoon. Nothing exciting at all.

Straight away. We only had one shell over so we were very lucky indeed.

Thursday 8 July 1915

We left for trenches about 3pm. Had tea on the way; oh it was good. We finished the journey carrying telephones. We arrived dead tired about 11.30. I was lucky in being able to *sleep*?

Additional note at end of diary

I have heard a terrible account of our poor chaps who have just come down from the line. Poor devils what they had to go through.

Friday 9 July 1915

Quite a nice day; quiet. A bombardment took place but was soon over. We are quite comfortable in our dugouts.

Saturday 10 July 1915

Fairly quiet day but rather noisy towards night. So far we have had no casualties I believe. On phone duty from 9pm until 3am Sunday. What a long night.

Sunday 11 July 1915

Calm morning but towards noon enemy started bombarding. They fell awfully near and was hit about 4pm. Laid in R B dressing station until about 12.45 am. They had sent shells over at intervals but all was quiet now.

Monday 12 July 1915

Was taken to Poperinge by ambulance, moved to Hazelbrock arriving about 7.30. Wounds were then dressed and we went by hospital train to Boulogne and then on to general hospital at Camier. My wound was very sore and the journey was an awful long one. We were placed on nice beds in tents where I slept topping.

Tuesday 13 July 1915

I was x-rayed but luckily the wound was clean. Quite a nice place, comfortable and plenty of good food. It's quite nice to be in a bed again among the sheets.

Wednesday 14 July 1915

Everything still nice and quiet. Rained hard during the day. I am longing to get up, also for a nice letter from distant friends.

Thursday 15 July 1915

Everything as usual. I ask to get up and am allowed to hobble now. Feel quite fresh considering.

Friday 16 July 1915

"Oh what a day it is. Oh my" St Swithin has started with a vengeance. We all pity the poor devils in the trenches. "Letter received".

Saturday 17 July 1915

Nothing much to write as everything is much the same here. It has stopped raining.

Sunday 18 July 1915

Quite a lovely day makes one glad to be alive, only I wish I was somewhere else, it would be twice as nice.

Monday 19 July 1915

A lovely day. I begin to feel much better already. Only I wish I was going home instead of getting better here.

Tuesday 20 July 1915

I see by the papers we have had a few casualties but nothing much. An American staff are taking over this hospital today.

Wednesday 21 July 1915

Quite a nice day. Am ready to move from here now; I expect to the base somewhere.

Thursday 22 July 1915

Been pouring with rain all the afternoon. We are to move to the convalescent camp in a day or two.

Friday 23 July 1915

We were inspected by the CO today. Several men were put back, their wounds not being healed. Several of us however are waiting to go.

Saturday 24 July 1915

A lovely day but nothing out of the way happened. We are still waiting to move. We heard that General French is expecting this camp to morrow.

Sunday 25 July 1915

A lovely day. We went to morning service, quite a gathering. Their singing was awfully flat until "I" arrived.

Monday 26 July 1915

We move to C C by motor. Awfully nice ride. The beds are nice but not like those in hospital.

Tuesday 27 July 1915

Couldn't sleep worse luck the food here is rather poor, but still, one mustn't grumble. I'm having my wound dressed each day.

Wednesday 28 July 1915

My leg is discharging a bit but nothing much and is healing up to quite well Crooks gave us an amusing and informative lecture. We all thoroughly enjoyed it.

Thursday 29 July 1915

Lovely day but I have to do orderly ???? oh the grease(?). How I do hate that job. We have C O inspection, several returned to base.

Friday 30 July 1915

We have Mrs Lena Askwells(?) concert party tonight. We had a wee march of a mile this morning. Anxious day waiting for a letter ?? but I suppose its my fault as usual.

Saturday 31 July 1915

Had a wee route march in the morning but am downhearted; no letter. I think I shall desert. I don't think

Additional not at end of diary

Our battn retook trenches taken but had to abandon them. I think they haven't done nothing but credit to the first line.

Sunday 1 August 1915

I was on fatigue so that I was unable to go to church. But in the evening we had a nice service in YMCA.

Monday 2 August 1915

Quite showery weather. We had a little route march in the morning. I am thinking of home and hoping they are all having a good time.

Tuesday 3 August 1915

Sharp showers at intervals. did a fatigue QMS. But went away and wrote a letter to D. Oh I love work (poss word?)???? received letter. I'm ever so pleased with myself.

Wednesday 4 August 1915

Nothing unusual happened. Went for a slight route march. A lovely day

Thursday 5 August 1915

On fatigue for a little while in the morning. Nothing doing after that, had a little parcel from Preston. We had a game of football in the evening.

Friday 6 August 1915

A rather miserable day – trying to rain. We are all looking forward to the sports tomorrow.

Saturday 7 August 1915

We had sports today in miserable weather. I ran in the 100 yards but was too slow for 2nd place, getting old, that's what it is. I saw one of our lads. He told a tale of the gallant lads. I'm so sorry the poor old chap got hit.

Sunday 8 August 1915

We had a short service in Tipperary Hut and in the evening I and a pal walked along to the bridges at Etaples.

Monday 9 August 1915

We received the notable sum of 5 francs today; what wealth to be sure. I received parcel for d, o, d. awfully pleased with it.

Tuesday 10 August 1915

In the evening we had a motor trip to Paris Plage. A lovely day, we enjoyed ourselves very much. An aeroplane came down on the shore. The people flocked to see it. We returned 8pm

Wednesday 11 August 1915

Dining hall fatigue until teatime, then went to the officers mess and waited dinner. It's good grub one gets and one relishes it after the army fare.

Thursday 12 August 1915

My first day in the officers mess. One has to keep on all day but there(sic then?) its worse up the line. I think it only lasts while one of the lads are sick.

Friday 13 August 1915

It has been a lovely day and now I am waiting to go to bed. I have just written to M D and G. My leg is still discharging a bit.

Saturday 14 August 1915

Quite a nice day I have been busy all day in the mess room. But one gets a good feed which goes a long way in the army.

Sunday 15 August 1915

I had five letters from Dais from Haslingfield. Watch cricket match in afternoon and wrote letter in the evening.

Monday 16 August 1915

One or two sharp showers during the day. I don't get out much now as in the mess it's now all work until 10 or 11 at night.

Tuesday 17 August 1915

I had the offer of a trip to Paris Plage but no good going with no money is it. I want to get a silk pc (postcard) before I leave here.

Wednesday 18 August 1915

Nothing doing to excite anyone, excepting a football match in the evening, fine day. A good match, our camp just winning.

Thursday 19 August 1915

I leave the officers mess, the former chap having come out of hospital. I don't mind as it as awful hard and long hours. I don't think I could have stood it long.

Friday 20 August 1915

Our camp played 15 div'n reinforcements winning 1-0. In the evening we were entertained by a ventriloquist from Bradford in the YMCA. Lovely day.

Saturday 21 August 1915

I was disappointed not getting letter. I dreamt in the night about letter, it seemed awfully real. Never mind I'm bound to get one in the morning. Fine day. We heard that a channel boat had sunk.

Sunday 22 August 1915

Orderly man at dining hall all day so didn't go to church at all. It was a nice day. We had no Sunday papers or mails, that's the first time without a paper here.

Monday 23 August 1915

Orderly man again, my luck is in but I don't mind. Received parcel from Flora, she's a dear. We had a pay day when we received the sum of 5 francs.

Tuesday 24 August 1915

We are having glorious weather. A debate was held in the YMCA, 'Should we use gas'. It was passed unanimously.

Wednesday 25 August 1915

There was nothing much on today. Spent the day playing pontoon.

Thursday 26 August 1915

Our company went to Paris Plage but poor me was on fatigue all day instead. Up all night with wee Jock, poor little kid. Ventriloquist in YMCA.

Friday 27 August 1915

Very hot again today. It is too much to work hard in, so I'm glad we have it easy. Wee Jock went to blighty, lucky kid, I wish it was me. Sports are being held tomorrow.

Saturday 28 August 1915

We had some splendid sports in the afternoon. At night the camp's famous mouth organ band entertained us.

Sunday 29 August 1915

Received parcel from dear old Dais. We went to service in 'Tipperary Hut' in the morning, quite enjoyed it.

Monday 30 August 1915

It rained during last night and the weather is much cooler. I was orderly man, or rather on fatigue all day.

Tuesday 31 August 1915

Reported sick so escaped all fatigues. The wind is quite cold. Did some washing in the afternoon. Received parcel from M D O G.

Wednesday 1 September 1915

Nothing unusual happened. It was awfully wet all day.

Thursday 2 September 1915

The new hut for the YMCA was opened by a concert party given by the generals. It was quite a good show for amateurs.

Friday 3 September 1915

All the week it has been cold and wet making every where miserable. I heard from home of Ada's wedding on the 19th Sept.

Saturday 4 September 1915

We were down to go to Paris Plage but convoy came in and so we were disappointed. Perhaps we will go Sunday.

Sunday 5 September 1915

Most lovely day after a wet and cold week. I did not go to church as I was on fatigue all day.

Monday 6 September 1915

We were inspected by O C and was marked down to go to the base the following day. Received parcel from D

Tuesday 7 September 1915

At 2pm we were marched down to the base. I was lucky as I got in the same tent with chums. It begins to seem like the old life.

Wednesday 8 September 1915

Revielle at 5 am, breakfast 6.30. My word, one notices it after a few weeks of ease. We were paraded before O C, and after wards drew our equipment; it is all equipment brought from the trenches, one wonders what became of the original owner.

Thursday 9 September 1915

I do my first parade, we went and bathed at Paris Plage. It was delicious(sic), I could have stayed there all day.

Friday 10 September 1915

We marched to the drill ground and do a bit of trench digging to keep fit. In the afternoon we drew F5 (*francs*) so we (David and I) had a royal tea in the Tipperary Hut.

Saturday 11 September 1915

We had a route march full pack (I don't think). I had a pair of socks for ammunition. In the evening we went to the Tipperary Hut

Sunday 12 September 1915

We have had a lovely week of fine weather. Today we had an open air service and afterwards went for a walk in the evening.

Monday 13 September 1915

Today we marched to the drill ground and went through the old drudge of squad drill etc. We are all longing to get away from here.

Tuesday 14 September 1915

We had rather a wet morning so we didn't do any parade. In the afternoon we had a little musketry for about an hour. Received no letter from D but cigarettes from Nance.

Wednesday 15 September 1915

The troops marched to Etaples to wash their clothes. I dodged the parade though, I wasn't having any.

Thursday 16 September 1915

Today we had a lecture in the morning and in the afternoon went trench digging. That's all I did 'went', I didn't do any work.

Friday 17 September 1915

We spent on the drill ground from 8am to 2.00. Afterwards we were paid out 5 francs.

Saturday 18 September 1915

Paraded 7.30 for route march and got back 12 am. I broke my duck by falling out for the first time, it was only laziness though.

Sunday 19 September 1915

An open air service was held this morning. In the afternoon we went pinching pears at a little village called Enoch. Ada's wedding day.

Monday 20 September 1915

This morning we were on fatigue, gathering brush wood. In the afternoon we fired on the miniature range.

Tuesday 21 September 1915

We had a comfortable day rigging tents. We put up 125, not bad for us who love work. Hoping for a letter from D.

Wednesday 22 September 1915

On the road to Paris Plage to bathe when we were picked out for a draft to the 9th. We didn't go up eventually as only a few were needed. I was disappointed as I wanted to get out of this hole.

Thursday 23 September 1915

Paraded 7.30 for training ground. We were messed about there until 2pm. Talk about fed up with the army.

Friday 24 September 1915

We had a comfortable route march of about 10 miles. It was awfully close but cool. Divms (*Divisions*) of troops are arriving from England.

Saturday 25 September 1915

I was on guard from 8am until 8.30 Sunday. Quite a cushy job, and I rather enjoyed it, being(?) my first.

Sunday 26 September 1915

Came off duty 9am ordered for draft 12am. We paraded full marching order 6pm. Entrained in trucks, 35 in each.

Monday 27 September 1915

We reached Poperinge 5 am and marched to our rest camp. We are under canvas, quite a surprise this. Things are looking up.

Tuesday 28 September 1915

My first night up here under the old conditions. We can hear an occasional shell but very far off. The General thanked the troops for the gallant job on 25th.

Wednesday 29 September 1915

Dirty wet day. One is liable to get miserable, but we're not downhearted yet.

Thursday 30 September 1915

I returned to the signallers today. We heard that we are out of the trenches for some time now.

Friday 1 October 1915

In the morning we have flag signalling, in the afternoon the buzzer. I can't hardly read at all now, out of practice I suppose.

Saturday 2 October 1915

Had an easy morning doing visual signalling with lamp and telescope. In the afternoon the Sigs played the Transport. Beat them 3-1.

Sunday 3 October 1915

We went to baths 8am, on return we were ordered to prepare to go back to trenches. We had one casualty on journey. Arrived destination 8.30pm. Fine

Monday 4 October 1915

We have had a very quiet time here today only hoping it will last. Nothing of importance has happened. Slight shower in the morning.

Tuesday 5 October 1915

The enemy bombarded a position on our left for 3 hours but ceased about 8 am. Quiet afterwards.

Wednesday 6 October 1915

After a quiet day we were relieved by the 2 WR. Came back by limber to Vlamertinghe. We were first in huts.

Thursday 7 October 1915

Slept until 11.00 o'clock and had a very quiet day. It's dull but fine.

Friday 8 October 1915

We moved up into reserve dugouts cushy so far, 6 chaps on the phone.

Saturday 9 October 1915

Quite an uneventful day so far. Could do this for the duration.

Sunday 10 October 1915

We had a fine dinner of beans (*and*) spuds which we found in the garden. It was 'bonne'

Monday 11 October 1915

Fine and calm two of the chaps went out to pick some blackberries we had them for dinner. They were fine.

Tuesday 12 October 1915

All was quiet until evening when we had a short bombardment. We had a lovely dinner of blackberries.

Wednesday 13 October 1915

We moved up to these trenches. They are poor ones and I believe likely to get flooded. We didn't get comfortable until midnight.

Thursday 14 October 1915

Fine day had a few whizz bangs over, otherwise quiet. Could have done with some water.

Friday 15 October 1915

Had an ordinary number of shells over. In the morning we lost two casualties otherwise ????

Saturday 16 October 1915

In front of use are the Landsturm of Wartensburgs. I suppose it doesn't matter who really, they are all the same to us.

Sunday 17 October 1915

Enemy exploded mine burying several poor devils. The ground fair shook. In the afternoon we had three hours artillery duel. I had three letters today. Capt(? Capital?)

Monday 18 October 1915

We captured two prisoners who reported that the enemy were attacking at dawn. Nothing came of it though. Hoping to be relieved soon.

Tuesday 19 October 1915

Quite a quiet day, nothing at all exciting. We had a ??? (believed to be the name of a German plane) overhead. He stuck it for quite a long time in spite of rifle bullets.

Wednesday 20 October 1915

Daisy's birthday. I wish her the very best. Quiet day here.

Thursday 21 October 1915

We had a few whizz bangs over in the trench but had only one casualty by a sniper. "They are swines"

Friday 22 October 1915

After a quiet day we were relieved by the buffs at 10 o'clock. We reached the train at about 1 o'clock.

Saturday 23 October 1915

We reached this billet at 5.30 dead tired, we had a fine sleep on some straw, just like a feather bed.

Sunday 24 October 1915

Out all day laying lines to the Coys Very cold but fine.

Monday 25 October 1915

A dreadful wet and cold day. We had nothing on at all in the way of parades. Cleared up about 6pm

Tuesday 26 October 1915

Nothing doing. We were on headquarters station. We went up to receive our pay.

Wednesday 27 October 1915

Wet again. We spent the day playing Bragg, that is all we can do out here.

Thursday 28 October 1915

A wet day we are having miserable weather now. But still we ought to be satisfied being out of the trenches.

Friday 29 October 1915

We went for an 8 mile route march in fine weather. We all enjoyed it very much as we had no packs to carry.

Saturday 30 October 1915

A fine day we had a little sparing match in the evening. Later we moved up to C Coy where I found a parcel from Lill(?). I did orderly man.

Sunday 31 October 1915

It has been wet and cold today, church services being voluntary. C Company played D and ended in a draw, 2-2.

Monday 1 November 1915

We came from headquarters to C Coy, we are fairly comfortable.

Tuesday 2 November 1915

Discovered a way into the hen run. We shall have some eggs now.

Wednesday 3 November 1915

Another wet day. What rotten weather.

Thursday 4 November 1915

Wet day again drills(?) (about much?). Received parcel from Lill and Nance.

Friday 5 November 1915

Today we had a brigade route march of about 9 miles, it was inclined to be wet but we all enjoyed it very much.

Saturday 6 November 1915

Nothing doing so far.

Sunday 7 November 1915

A nice fine day we are hoping it will last so as the ground will dry up.

Monday 8 November 1915

Nothing doing today. Its fine, which is a good thing.

Tuesday 9 November 1915

Battalion route march, but I myself was on an inspection of recent drafts. Simply poured with rain in the evening.

Wednesday 10 November 1915

Nothing doing. We all had to bath in a waterproof sheet after we went to the cottage for a singsong.

Thursday 11 November 1915

I didn't stir today as it was my night on duty. We were paid F10 (*francs*) on account.

Friday 12 November 1915

A brigade route march was arranged for today but was cancelled at the 11th hour on account of the wet.

Saturday 13 November 1915

Terrible wet morning, a gale blowing as well. It turned out a lovely moonlight(sic) night.

Sunday 14 November 1915

Orders came that we had to remain on the phone all last night; rotten I call it. Services today purely voluntary.

Monday 15 November 1915

No news today. Signallers played Brigade football, ended 2-3.

Tuesday 16 November 1915

We had a rifle inspection by the adjt (*adjutant*) We leave for trenches on 18th inst.

Wednesday 17 November 1915

A very quiet day. We leave for trenches tomorrow.

Thursday 18 November 1915

At 2.30 we left Houtrer(?) for the trenches travelling via bus. Cold and very wet we found it awfully muddy in our trenches.

Friday 19 November 1915

Quite a quiet day. Practically no shelling on either side.

Saturday 20 November 1915

In the afternoon we had a few shells over. The RB relieved us at night and we returned to Canal Bk(?).

Sunday 21 November 1915

Except for the usual artillery exchanges, the day was quiet.

Monday 22 November 1915

Relieved RB. Everything quiet.

Tuesday 23 November 1915

Things were quiet for us. The usual shelling passing over us.

Wednesday 24 November 1915

Our artillery was quite active during the relief. We (*were*) expecting some retaliation but none came. Cold but fine.

Thursday 25 November 1915

Today we were warned for a linesmans course at St Jan-au-be???. Things were quiet where we were.

Friday 26 November 1915

We returned to our camp by transport. It was awfully cold and the camp was like a ploughed field.

Saturday 27 November 1915

Things were quiet for us today in the evening we went and had sardines and coffee at Marie's.

Sunday 28 November 1915

At 1pm we set out for St Jan. Our luck was in as we got a GS wagon. We went to within 200 yards of our destination.

Monday 29 November 1915

We began our course by trying ????? etc. In the evening we went to Waton(?) to the cinema. It was good.

Tuesday 30 November 1915

The ground had become soft owing to the weather becoming milder. Very unpleasant under foot.

Wednesday 1 December 1915

Rained but very mild.

Thursday 2 December 1915

Had an easy day. Found a letter awaiting me. I was glad as I had been looking forward.

Friday 3 December 1915

Up till now our work had been all the same, days all alike. In the evening we had a second trip to the pictures. It was bonne.

Saturday 4 December 1915

We were working on lines until midnight. Awful working in the dark in the mud.

Sunday 5 December 1915

At 9.30 we had a kit inspection after wards we were on fatigue for a few hours.

Monday 6 December 1915

At 9am we set out for Ypres. The packs went on a wagon. We reached Canal Bk (*Bank?*) at 2pm a distance of about 14 miles.

Tuesday 7 December 1915

We got to Potijze at about 5pm last night. Tired as usual. In the afternoon we laid a short line.

Wednesday 8 December 1915

We didn't get up until about 12 o'clock. A very quiet day.

Thursday 9 December 1915

I received a parcel from Mr A(?) in the afternoon we walked back to Bde (*Brigade*) Headquarters. The batt was relieved.

Friday 10 December 1915

A quiet day. I got two nice letters from D.

Saturday 11 December 1915

The X roads were shelled heavily by the enemy. They quieted down towards dusk.

Sunday 12 December 1915

A quiet day. We went for a stroll to Bde Headquarters.

Monday 13 December 1915

The Germans sent over a few big shells. Otherwise things are quiet.

Tuesday 14 December 1915

The enemy shelled our position heavily with 8 inch shells. We were lucky in not having a casualty.

Wednesday 15 December 1915

A quiet day we left trenches at 5.30. Travelling by bus we reached Mont(?)-hergue(?) about 4am Friday.

Thursday 16 December 1915

We had to go to RB HQ for the night but shifted to our own billets later in the day.

Friday 17 December 1915

A quiet day fine but dull.

Saturday 18 December 1915

We were paid 20f today. Ordered to stand by to move up as reinforcements.

Sunday 19th December 1915

Germans attacked our positions with gas but turned out utter failure.

Monday 20 December 1915

Quiet day glad we didn't have to move from here went down the cottage for a gamble.

Tuesday 21 December 1915

Nothing doing I had a nice parcel from Ware(?). Also letter from Eva.

Wednesday 22 December 1915

A very quiet day so far we've had it very mild.

Thursday 23 December 1915

We are looking forward to getting a "little bit of good" for the 25th. So far having it quiet.

Friday 24 December 1915

A very quiet day we were paid out 10f for a little jollification I expect.

Saturday 25 December 1915

A fairly good time we had chicken and plum pudding from home. We also had an issue in rations(?) so far we've had it very mild.

Sunday 26 December 1915

We had a very quiet day but in the afternoon we had a nice ??? dinner and a song after wards was bonne.

Monday 27 December 1915

Went down the village in the evening and had a game of cards.

Tuesday 28 December 1915

A wet and miserable day in the evening I went down the village.

Wednesday 29 December 1915

A Mild day preparing to leave tomorrow. We (*had*) a nice chicken for dinner.

Thursday 30 December 1915

Left Houthergue at 2.30pm by bus. Arrived camp Vlamertinge 5.30.

Friday 31 December 1915

Shifted to new camp in the morning left for Poperinge at 7pm. A good many shells fell around Poperinge during the day.

Notes for 1916

Noon we moved up to supports. We were shelled terrible for hours. None of us ever thought to come back. We were gassed to(sic). What a hell it was a chap killed on my right and another on my left. A day I shall never forget.

1917

Thursday 11 January 1917

Arrived in camp after *isolation*? Found parcel awaiting me with this little book enclosed. I really must be more careful of this one.

Friday January 12 1917

On R E fatigue digging drains etc. Wet, but not too uncomfortable. Dodged it in the afternoon, had a sleep instead.

Saturday 13 January 1917

On fatigue at the boshe camp. Quite cushy really, sitting round the fire all day. Reached camp about 5pm. A wet day but not too bad. Went to ????

Sunday 14 January 1917

We were on a fatigue loading timber at the quay. Awful day, snow and rain. Reached camp afterwards at 11pm when we got a lovely roast dinner.

Monday 15 January 1917

No parades today excepting a lecture in the morning and again in the evening. Rather a cold day but dry. One of our airships over our camp during the afternoon.

Tuesday 16 January 1917

We had reveille at 5am and left for a fatigue at 6am. We were unloading a barge which contained coils of barbed wire. A pouring wet day we were soaked through before night.

Wednesday 17 January 1917

I was lucky in *gaging* fatigue today so had a day at home. Fairly decent weather.

Thursday 18 January 1917

Another day off. Rained occasionally.

Friday January 19 1917

Today at 7am we left for the parade ground. It is a rare drag up to it, 500 ft above sea level. Swung the leg all day waiting for tea time.

Saturday 20 January 1917

Had a parade at 7 for the drill ground. We were on squad drill up til 12.30 when we left for home. Went to the pictures at night.

Sunday 21 January 1917

Went on church parade at 8.30am. Spent rest of the day reading the ??????????????. We were warned for a parade at 6am the following morning.

Monday 22 January 1917

Inspection at 6 o'clock ??? kit etc. Paraded 5.30 pm for draft. Marched to Le Havre arriving about 9pm.

Tuesday 23 January 1917

Arrived Rouen about 5am. Afterwards marched to rest camp where we rested until about 3pm. We then joined the train.

Wednesday 24 January 1917

Reached Abbeville about daybreak travelling in trucks each containing 35 men. There we stopped all day.

Thursday 25 January 1917

We reached railhead (Morlacoint) early in the morning. About 9 we left for rest camp where we were able to clean up. At 3pm we left for Berneville arriving about 6.30pm.

Friday January 26 1917

Had no blanket so sat round a fire during the night. At 4.30pm we left for the ??? ???? ???? ?????? Nice marching we were able to put packs on transport. Sent back to old ??? ??? in signallers dugout. Best kip I'd had during the week.

Saturday 27 January 1917

Did nothing all day excepting paying visits to old friends.

Sunday 28 January 1917

About 2 pm we relieved the S21. Nice billets in our old sector.

Monday 29 January 1917

Nothing much doing. Fritzy is fairly quiet except for the mortars he chucks about.

Tuesday 30 January 1917

Had a few casualties in C Company.

Wednesday 31 January 1917

Still very cold but we have lovely fires at night.

Thursday 1 February 1917

Nothing much doing. I was dodging round the line during the day.

Friday 2 February 1917

Awfully cold weather. We were relieved at 2pm by the SL1. Marched off to billets in DLE. Rather bad billets.

Saturday 3 February 1917

Nothing doing. We had a bath. Awfully cold. Mine was a quiet one. IN the afternoon were paid out dix francs.

Sunday 4 February 1917

Lovely day, still awfully cold. In the afternoon I went to take over the line at HQ in the H2 section.

Monday 5 February 1917

Nothing much doing. In the evening Gypsy Smith held a short service in the YMCA hut.

Tuesday February 1917

Tuesday 6 February 1917

At 10.45 we left HW for the line. About 1pm we relieved the DLI trenches. Were in fine condition.

Wednesday 7 February 1917

Quiet morning, everything was quiet during the day.

Thursday 8 February 1917

A quiet day. We've had nothing to trouble us at all so far. Weather still cold and dry.

Friday 9 February 1917

Lovely dry weather but still cold.

Saturday 10 February 1917

Still having a decent time. The fire in the dugout is makes us filthy, but still its all clean dirt.

Sunday 11 February 1917

We were relieved this afternoon by the OB, we then went into immediate reserve.

Monday 12 February 1917

Our new home isn't too bad. We are in a big cellar, just 9 of us. I've an old bed to sleep on so enjoy a decent night kip.

Tuesday 13 February 1917

We were on working parties again today doing about 4 hours work. So we ain't over done. The weather is a little milder.

Wednesday 14 February 1917

The C?? on work from 6 til 11 tonight. I dodged it, out one gate in tother.

Thursday 15 February 1917

On work again tonight from 6 til about 10.30. Quite cushy though.

Friday 16 February 1917

On fatigue this morning until about 3pm, we then were relieved by the RB. Were put in billets upstairs this time with the ???? for bed.

Saturday 17 February 1917

One or two little parades during the morning. Worked from 12 until 4.30. Much milder, all the ice in the road has thawed.

Sunday 18 February 1917

Working digging ???? trenches. We had not far to go, it consisting of four hours work, then finished for the day.

Monday 19 February 1917

Same as yesterday

Tuesday 20 February 1917

Working again today but had to go much further.

Wednesday 21 February 1917

Came back today. Not fatigue but had enough.

Thursday 22 February 1917

Still working

Friday 23 February 1917

Same as yesterday

Saturday 24 February 1917

Nothing doing

Sunday 25 February 1917

Nothing doing

Monday 26 February 1917

Nothing doing

Tuesday 27 February 1917

Nothing doing

Wednesday 28 February 1917

Nothing doing

Thursday 1 March 1917

Same again.

Friday 2 March 1917

Fed up with working parties. A rumour is about we are going in the line. I hope it's true, we've had the same old thing the last few days.

Saturday 3 March 1917

Another day of work, simply fed up.

Sunday 4 March 1917

Yes, it's true we're going in the line. Everybody seems pleased.

Monday 5 March 1917

Went into the line this afternoon. I'm glad as one had to work fairly hard [in the] working parties.

Tuesday 6 March 1917

A nice day, nothing doing at all. Having nice ??????????????????

Wednesday 7 March 1917

Received mothers parcel. It was the only important thing that happened today.

Thursday 8 March 1917

Eating and enjoying the parcel was the only thing worth mentioning today.

Friday 9 March 1917

Had a busy day on the lines. All was quite though.

Saturday 10 March 1917

A nice quiet day nothing doing at all.

Sunday 1 March 1917

A quiet day until about one pm then Fritzzyus with 8 inch shells. We had to leave our HQ when we were relieved by 9-95

Monday 12 March 1917

Had a nice nights sleep at Dainville. Nothing doing through the day.

Tuesday 13 March 1917

Had reveille at 4am. Marched off at 5.45am, marched about 8 miles to Fossieux. Here we stayed for one night.

Wednesday 14 March 1917

We had reveille at 7am then breakfast, moving off at 9.30am. Marching 4 k we were billeted in the ??? for ???? villages of Sombrin.

Thursday 15 March 1917

We had a running parade at 6.40, then a second one from 10 until 1pm. Our batt [battalion] team played 7th, lost 5-2. Cold day.

Friday 16 March 1917

Physical jerks at 6.40 with a second parade at 8.45 with the company. We then did a signalling parade until 12.40

Sunday 17 March 1917

A church parade at 9am, battle order. We afterwards had a CO parade for about one hour and did ceremonial drill.

Monday 19 March 1917

The same old parades. Nothing else doing.

Tuesday 20 March 1917

Had a run this morning, just to give one an appetite for breakfast.

Wednesday 21 March 1917

Same parades. Still having very cold weather.

Thursday 22 March 1917

The most exciting thing that happened today was that we were paid out 10 francs during the afternoon.

Friday 23 March 1917

Left Sombrin about 11am for Fossieux arriving between 2 and 3 o'clock. The roads were awful. Went to the cinema at night.

Saturday 24 March 1917

Usual parades. No.1 platoon of A Coy played 13 of D for the final during the afternoon, The former winning 4-0. Rather wet.

Sunday 25 March 1917

Church parade for volunteers at 11am, also signalling parade till one. Cold day. The clocks were advanced one hour at 11pm

Monday 26 March 1917

Pouring wet morning, we did no early parade. About 9.30 we did buzzer work in one of the huts.

Tuesday 27 March 1917

Physical jerks at 6.40 then a second parade at 9.30. A miserable and wet day, nearly got wet through.

Wednesday 28 March 1917

We had reveille at 6.30am packed up and left for Dainville at 11.30 arriving about 5.30pm. Lovely day, quite the best for some time.

Thursday 29 March 1917

A cooshy time. We were paid out in the afternoon. A cold wet day.

Friday 30 March 1917

Spent most of the day playing NAP.

Saturday 31 March 1917

Nothing doing.

Sunday 1 April 1917

Voluntary church service but I did not go.

Monday 2 April 1917

Nothing much doing

Tuesday 3 April 1917

No parade until 8.30??. We went out to practice throwing live bombs. Pouring wet night.

Wednesday 4 April 1917

Rather a miserable day. The batt was on practice work. We were paid out in the afternoon.

Thursday 5 April 1917

About 2.30pm we left to take over dugouts in the line. I was on the go right up till midnight, finished up dead tired.

Friday 6 April 1917

A miserable day, raining on and off. In the afternoon I was able to walk around Fritz old lines, they were in a state.

Saturday 7 April 1917

Our artillery still bombarding about 7pm. We paraded and marched to the caves. It was a peculiar sensation being down so far.

Sunday 8 April 1917

Had a good night sleep; quite warm, not a sound from above although we knew our artillery was still battering away. Water dripped down which was hardly pleasant. Left for the line at 6pm.

Monday 9 April 1917

Spent last night in one of Fritz old dugouts. Practically no sleep. We attacked at 25 minutes to eight. Took first line in 8 minutes, second in 10. Had a few casualties which I suppose one must expect. I saved my rum issue til it was time to go over. BTF casualties.

Notes: Easter Monday shall never forget. Attacked 7.45am. Few casualties going over. We had to go about 600yards to German line so were lucky in a sense. We got between 2-3 hundred prisoners, a trench mortar, 2 machine guns and a bomb thrower. We obviously caught Fritz relieving as prisoners were clean others dirty as though they had withstood bombardment. In our dugout, Cassel by name, we found a sandbag of eggs, bread, butter etc as though the mail had just arrived. The weather was cold and a driving wind then the rain in our faces making it awfully unpleasant. There were thousands of cavalry behind us, it was just a happening how I imagined it was, in dear old England.

Tuesday 10 April 1917

Last night wasn't too bad considering the strange surrounding. Fritz so far hasn't counter-attacked.

Wednesday 11 April 1917

Heavy bombardment at dawn we heard that we might be wanted. I was glad it was cancelled as we were done. Relieved about noon. Proceeded to reserve, afterwards relieved.

Thursday 12 April 1917

Left for Wankatin about 3am, had tea half way. We were all on our knees. Lucky we got a motor ride. Billet cold.

Friday 13 April 1917

Left Wankatin 6.30 for Novellette. In good billet. I was lucky and touched for a with the blankets.

Saturday 14 April 1917

I had to parade at 7am to go with billeting party to Berlencourt(sic Bilencourt). Nice day, we found good billet.

Sunday 15 April 1917

Had a quiet day. Just a voluntary church parade. I suppose nearly all the battn rested as much as possible.

Monday 16 April 1917

We had physical jerks for half an hour. I was lucky in missing all parades afterwards.

Tuesday 17 April 1917

Pouring wet morning. We had no parade on. I did nothing all day.

Wednesday April 1917

The most important thing that happened today was that we drew bread for tomorrow's ration. Although we have only been without it for 10 days, it seems like longer.

Thursday 19 April 1917

Nothing else on except signalling parade which was enjoyable, finishing just before dinner.

Friday 20 April 1917

Long distance signalling. Nice day, finished for the day at 12.30pm.

Saturday 21 April 1917

Physical jerks before breakfast. Parade 9am for battn scheme. Home again about 1.00. Nice day.

Sunday 22 April 1917

There was a companies parade today, repetition of yesterday. I went sick had ??? therefore missed everything. Nice dry day.

Monday 23 April

A nice pleasant day, quite warm marching. We left Birlencourt about 10am for Hauteville arriving at about 1 o'clock. Found nice billets awaiting us, we soon had a fire and fried steak and beans. Was good.

Tuesday 24 April

Received moving orders at 6am, moved about 7.30. A lovely day, quite pleasant on the road. We reached Bedumetz about 11am. Moving again at 5pm into reserve. Did about 14 miles.

Wednesday 25 April

A nice day. At 9am we move up to old HQ, afterwards going up to reserve. It was marching over the broken country.

Thursday 26 April

A fine morning but was spoilt by Fritz's shelling. We had all sizes over but threw them anywhere we had d B.

Friday 27 April 1917

Another lovely fine day. Very little to mention except that Fritz shelled a little in retaliation for our strafing(?) 2M & FB (?) Getting good rations and nothing much to grumble at.

Saturday 28 April 1917

We went into the line tonight. Everything was as quiet as one can expect these days. I was pottering about up till daylight next morning.

Sunday 29 April 1917

We haven't much to grumble about of course there are shells but one can't expect anything different. There were no casualties, I believe.

Monday 30 April 1917

Another lovely day we hadn't nothing more exciting than the concussion of shells putting our candles out.

Tuesday 1 May 1917

At 4am we had a practice barrage, we had a few casualties as Fritz put one up as well with 5.9s It only lasted 10 minutes.

Wednesday 2 May 1917

We were relieved out of the line about 11pm and went back into reserve. The artillery had been fairly lively all day. The weather was grand. Shelled with gas and ??? shells,

Thursday 3 May 1917

About 4 am the artillery put up a barrage and we went over, except two batts. We had the opportunity of being in the rear this time. Moved up to support at night. We shelled by gas(?) shells.

Friday 4 May 1917

Another lovely day. We were relieved about 10pm and went back into reserve.

Saturday 5 May 1917

Another lovely day. Absolutely did nothing all long (sic day) long. Was told in the afternoon that I had been awarded military medal.

Sunday 6 May 1917

I did a turn from 9 til 1am this morning. I then went to ??? and stayed there until 3 in the afternoon. The weather was much cooler.

Monday 7 May 1917

Fritz shelled continuously during the day with 5.9s About dusk it started to rain making it a very miserable night.

Tuesday 8 May 1917

We were withdrawn from old trench as things were getting too warm. The roads were very heavy on our way back.

Wednesday 9 May 1917

had a good time under canvas things are much quieter here. Nothing much doing.

Thursday 10 May 1917

In the afternoon I left for Boisliex St Marc to work out a scheme with OB. Lovely weather.

Friday 11 May 1917

Had a good night. Woke in time for breakfast. I didn't go out today. So stayed in camp.

Saturday 12 May 1917

Today I went out by car as far as Ransart. We did nothing though as weather was bad.

Sunday 13 May 1917

This being a day of rest, we did the same, having no parades. So far we having been living like lords, having a fine time.

Monday 14 May 1917

We had another parade at 10pm today but I was content to stay in camp and read.

Tuesday 15 May 1917

I had a pleasant trip up in a balloon today; it was fine. Afterwards we left for the battn, I went to transport camp and slept there for the night.

Wednesday 16 May 1917

Today I rejoined the batt at Neuve Vitasse. We were supposed to be in reserve I believe. I was busy in the evening laying lines.

Thursday 17 May 1917

Passed most of the day laying out lines. The weather was very bad, and awful for the chaps in the line.

Friday 18 May 1917

A little better today, the ground is drying up. Fine now.

Saturday 19 May 1917

Did nothing all day except a cycle ride to the transport camp. Got wounded tonight about 9pm and was soon away to the field ambulance.

Sunday 20 May 1917

About 2am we left in a field ambulance for the 43rd CCS arriving just before dawn. Everybody was nice to us. Afterwards in the evening we left for the base.

Monday 21 May 1917

We were able to have a good lay-in. We arrived at Le Triport about 6am. After a bath one felt lovely and clean.

Tuesday 22 May 1917

This is my second day in bed. It is fine to lay in clean clothes again and to feel clean in one's body.

Wednesday 23 May 1917

Asked to get up as I'd (*had*) enough of bed. Went along the cliffs during the day, it was fine. Disappointed not going to blighty.

Thursday 24 May 1917

Spent most of the day on the cliffs. I'm afraid I did nothing but sleep but went with the intention of reading.

Friday 25 May 1917

Things much similar as yesterday went to the cliffs with a nice book but fell asleep on the grass, woke up just in time for dinner.

Saturday 26 May 1917

Spent morning on the cliffs. The afternoon at the cinema. Awfully hot inside, one couldn't really relish them

Sunday 27 May 1917

All the week we have had the best of weather. I feel quite fit excepting my knee which isn't right yet.

Monday 28 May 1917

A miserable wet day. There was a concert in the YMCA but one couldn't get in, it was too crowded. Came back and had a sleep instead.

Tuesday 29 May 1917

Was informed by the ADJT that father had passed away. He promised to recommend me for leave. It came (*as*) quite a shock, I had never dream't he was so bad. I saw the CO after dinner and left the hospital in ambulance about 9pm. Rain left Le Triport at 10.20 for Le Harvre.

Wednesday 30 May 1917

Our journey to Le Havre wasn't much to grumble about. Cocoa and bread and butter was given to us twice on the journey. It took practically twelve hours. We weren't long before we got on the ship the Essequito. When full we went out the harbour and waited there until 9.30pm before moving.

Under "Notes for 1918" at the end of the 1917 diary

– note these are sometimes difficult to read accurately

Friendship

Its for aid & comfort.

Through all the
relations and passages of

Life & Death.

It is fit for serene days
Graceful gifts & country
rambles

But also for rough road
and hard ???

Beneath the moon he told
his love.

The colour left her cheeks
and on the shoulder of

his coat(?)

It showed up plain
for weeks.

Thy Peace

We bless the for thy
peace of O God

Deep as the unfathomed
Sea

Which falls like ?????
on the road.

Of those who trust in thee.

That peace which suffers
and is string

Trusts where it cannot see
Dreams(?) o'not the trial very
too long

but leaves the end
with thee

That peace which flows seems & deep
A sever(?) in the soul.

Whose thanks(?) & living venture keep

Gods, Sunshine o'er the whole
G father give our hearts that peace.

Whatever the outward he
Till all likes discipline shall

cease
And we go home to thee.

In this sad world
where mortals rest
We were but Strangers,
Should we not turn to
Those we trust to save
us from our dangers,
for any where our
troubles seem to find
an end, is in the
fairy land of dreams o
r with a friend.

A wide spreading
Hopeful disposition is
One only true umbrella
In this world of tears

The world is a beautiful mansion
And life one golden hour
The heart is a beautiful garden
And memory its flowers